United Nations S/PV.5851 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5851st meeting

Wednesday, 12 March 2008, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Payot
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Somdah
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Ballestero
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Guidée
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	South Africa	Mr. Seakamela
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Bayley
	United States of America	Mr. Kujawinski
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2008/159)

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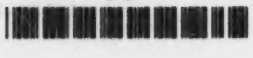

The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I wish to remind all speakers, as I indicated at the morning meeting, to limit their statements to no more than five minutes — this, in accordance with the agreement in the Council — so as to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Pakistan, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): First of all, let me congratulate you on behalf of the delegation of Pakistan on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are confident that with your well-known skills, this will be a most successful month for the Council.

I would also like to express our appreciation to the Ambassador and the delegation of Panama for their successful presidency last month.

We appreciate the convening of this open debate on Afghanistan. Two years after the London Conference, it is opportune to have a strategic review of the progress in the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact. A peaceful and stable Afghanistan is crucial to regional and international peace and security. As the country most affected by the decades of instability in Afghanistan, Pakistan has a direct and vital stake in the success of the efforts of the international community in Afghanistan.

We appreciate the overall quality of the analysis, objectivity and recommendations of the Secretary-General's latest report on Afghanistan. While avoiding dramatic description, the report is reflective of the challenges and the realities on the ground. It provides a useful overview of the situation which is relevant to the Council's discussion, particularly with regard to the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). There have been many successes, which must be appreciated and consolidated. There are deficiencies in several areas. However, what is most needed is better implementation, through enhanced coordination and the fulfilment of reciprocal commitments by Afghanistan and its international partners.

We believe that the key to success lies in pursuing a comprehensive approach, with emphasis on building Afghan capacity to assume greater control and ownership with regard to security, governance and development issues. We are pleased to note that that is also the central theme of the report of the Secretary-General.

The deterioration of the security situation in parts of Afghanistan is a common concern. As is clear from the present and previous United Nations reports, the factors contributing to insecurity and instability are diverse, complex and often interrelated. They also vary from region to region. Therefore, there is a need to follow approaches that are responsive to the challenges in each region. Increasing the strength of the troops of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) would help in the short term. However, for sustainable solutions, it is essential to focus more on building the national capacity of Afghanistan in the security sector, together with parallel endeavours aimed at political reconciliation, reconstruction and development.

A more coherent and feasible counter-narcotics policy is required, one that is more responsive to the underlying economic, social and political aspects linked to increased poppy cultivation. That is essential if we wish to deny an important source of funding to insurgents and other anti-Government elements.

Extending State authority and improving governance are also fundamental in restoring the confidence of the population in the ability of the Government to respond to their basic needs. The efforts of the Afghan Government in that regard merit our full support.

Security and governance issues cannot be divorced from development. As the report notes, despite progress in various social and economic indicators, the level of development is low, particularly at the provincial and district levels. Making security a prerequisite for development and assistance could prove to be counter-productive. We believe it is important to pursue the development track while security is being addressed. The launch of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy will be an important milestone and a major source of hope for the Afghan people. The international community must ensure adequate resources for its implementation. We hope that it will also inculcate a new culture of

assistance that is demand-driven and channelled mostly through the Afghan Government.

All these efforts to improve security, governance and development will have a greater impact if they are carried out in a politically propitious environment. The Afghan-led efforts for national reconciliation can play an important role in that regard and should be encouraged.

The agreements already reached, and other policies and measures being considered to promote regional economic cooperation, will benefit Afghanistan and all the countries of the region. Pakistan is an important partner in this endeavour. We will also host the next regional economic cooperation conference on Afghanistan.

The safe and voluntary return of all remaining Afghan refugees, more than 2 million of whom are still hosted by Pakistan, should also be accorded high priority. We welcome the emphasis placed in the report on increased assistance to create conditions conducive to the return of the refugees. However, we do not agree with the Secretary-General's observation that the fact that over 80 per cent of the refugees have been in exile for more than 20 years could be a factor inhibiting their return. All refugees should return to their homeland.

We appreciate the central and impartial role of the United Nations in coordinating the international efforts in Afghanistan. We welcome the appointment of Mr. Kai Eide as the Secretary-General's Special Representative. UNAMA's efforts should be focused on its core mandate in Afghanistan. We agree with the Secretary-General that UNAMA's existing mandate should be retained. We have also noted the areas identified by the Secretary-General as priorities for UNAMA. These should be carefully considered to ensure that they are totally consistent with UNAMA's current mandate and that they take into account the views of the host Government and others concerned. Given the realities on the ground, it is essential to avoid placing responsibilities on the United Nations that it may be not in a position to discharge and that could affect its neutrality and credibility.

Pakistan remains strongly committed to helping Afghanistan to achieve sustainable peace and development. Our destinies are interlinked. We seek to strengthen our close, friendly relations with Afghanistan, based on reciprocity and mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We want peace and greater prosperity for both our peoples. Our cooperation with Afghanistan is multifaceted. It is characterized by dialogue and regular exchange of visits at the highest levels. We are also trying to help reconciliation through the peace jirga, whose next meeting will be held in Pakistan.

Pakistan is a major contributor to Afghanistan's reconstruction and economic development. A number of projects identified in consultation with the Afghan Government have been implemented in various fields, including infrastructure development, education and health, in addition to capacity-building initiatives and training and scholarship programmes. We shall consider ways and means of designing our future assistance in accordance with the priorities of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. Our bilateral trade with Afghanistan totals $1.5 billion. We shall continue to support Afghanistan's integration with regional economic cooperation efforts. Indeed, the success of these endeavours requires peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region.

Pakistan's ability to contribute to peace and stability in Afghanistan and in the region will be enhanced following the recent fair and open elections in Pakistan and the assumption of office by a popularly elected Government. We hope that these will lead to closer coordination and consensus on a strategy for success in Afghanistan and in the region.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now call on the representative of Iceland.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): In support of the statement made on behalf of the European Union, I have the honour to address the Security Council on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Iceland.

The five Nordic countries engage in extensive cooperation in Afghanistan and are, by virtue of their coordinated efforts, among the major contributors to the stabilization and reconstruction of the country. We support the emerging consensus that the United Nations must take on a stronger role in the coordination of international efforts and that it must give a much-needed boost to the stabilization and development of Afghanistan, and we welcome this opportunity to reaffirm the central role of the United Nations. We also welcome the Secretary-General's appointment of Mr. Kai Eide of Norway as his new Special Representative and hope that the discussions in

the Security Council will serve to give him and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) the support and mandate that they need in order to take on the challenging tasks ahead.

UNAMA's role in coordination and in providing support to the Afghan authorities must be strengthened with a view to reinforcing Afghan leadership and enhancing international cohesion. That includes coordination with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which plays a key role, under a Security Council mandate, in establishing a secure environment for reconstruction and development. The provisions of the Afghanistan Compact and national strategies such as the upcoming Afghan National Development Strategy should be the foundations of our engagement.

In order to enable UNAMA and the new Special Representative to meet expectations in leading the coordination of international efforts in Afghanistan, the Security Council and United Nations Member States must give them the political backing and authority needed. It is also essential that expectations are matched by resources and the United Nations be given full support to exert its leading role and more fully accomplish all aspects of the UNAMA mandate.

We welcome the focus of the Secretary-General on sub-national governance, call for a further increase in the United Nations presence at the provincial level and would welcome an update on the efforts made to fill vacant posts in UNAMA to strengthen geographical coverage. Increased coverage would enable the United Nations to better focus on capacity-building for Afghan authorities at all levels and we note the efforts of the national Government in strengthening governance throughout Afghanistan, in particular through the creation of the Independent Directorate for Local Governance.

Humanitarian challenges remain extensive, and we are concerned that large areas of the country remain inaccessible to assistance due to insecurity. We look forward to the adoption of the Security Council resolution renewing the mandate of UNAMA.

The human rights situation in Afghanistan is precarious at best and human rights abuses are widespread. We encourage the Afghan Government to clearly demonstrate its commitment towards improving and protecting the human rights of all Afghans and to show leadership in championing core human rights issues such as freedom of speech and the rule of law. An independent human rights commission and a strong, pluralistic civil society are important achievements and imperative for introducing internationally recognized human rights standards into Afghanistan.

We support the observation of the Secretary-General on the need for a common approach that integrates security, governance, rule of law, human rights and social and economic development. An integrated approach should not only focus on the immediate security challenges, but combine the political, development and security efforts, so that they better mutually support each other. An integrated approach should also be based on a gender perspective and acknowledge the need for efforts to fight discrimination and strengthen the participation of Afghan women in all those areas and in society at large.

Efforts to establish security, including through training the Afghan National Security Forces, are essential. In recognition of the link between security and development, the efforts of the United Nations, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) should be as coherent and coordinated as possible. Measures to that end will be discussed at the NATO/International Security Assistance Force summit in Bucharest next month. The role of UNAMA is key in creating a more coherent and unified approach by the international community and vis-à-vis the Afghan Government.

Finally, a strengthened role for the United Nations in Afghanistan needs to make use of the capacities and efforts of the entire United Nations system. The activities of the United Nations Country Team should effectively support the implementation of the mandate and overall objectives of UNAMA.

We believe the report of the Secretary-General and the comments provided will contribute positively to improved results for the Afghan people through our continued engagement in Afghanistan. We reaffirm our long-term commitment to contribute to that effect.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate on Afghanistan. Supporting the Afghan Government and its people in forging a stable, peaceful future remains a top priority for my Government and for Canadians.

We extend our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his candid and insightful report on the situation in Afghanistan. His report describes a new future that is taking root, as the Afghan Government reaches out to its provinces, parliament finds its voice, women discover new opportunities and an army rises to protect the country. The Secretary-General also reminds us that the future we are pursuing will not be realized if we do not act quickly and in unison to confront a ruthless insurgency and to curb widespread corruption.

Canada welcomes the recent appointment of Mr. Kai Eide as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Afghanistan. We are committed to working with him to ensure that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is able to fulfil its role as adviser, coordinator and leader of the international civilian mission.

Canada also conveys its sincere appreciation to the outgoing Special Representative, Mr. Tom Koenigs, for his determined efforts over the course of the past two years, and to the Acting Special Representative, Mr. Asplund, for his steadfast direction of UNAMA during these first months of the year.

In addition, we take this opportunity to pay tribute to the dedicated efforts of the United Nations and other civilian staff in Afghanistan, who carry out their duties in challenging and often dangerous conditions. Their courage and commitment to Afghanistan have been essential to the progress achieved thus far.

The United Nations remains the bedrock of the international mission in Afghanistan. Now, more than ever, Member States look to UNAMA for leadership and guidance. Better aligning our efforts will require bold decision-making and strong political leadership by the new Special Representative. Canada looks to him to build consensus — where it can be reached — among international civilian actors. We will rely on him to communicate clearly the international community's intentions and concerns to the Afghan Government, while being open to, hearing and addressing their concerns.

It is Canada's hope that the Council will reflect the need for UNAMA to renew relationships and strengthen its offices. We hope that it will also help UNAMA to prioritize the issues that will be central to progress in 2008, while remaining focused on improving the daily lives of Afghans.

Success in Afghanistan will require a degree of coherence and cooperation that only the United Nations can bring about. To achieve that, UNAMA must be empowered to coordinate and represent those international actors who are party to the Afghanistan Compact. It must work closely with the International Security Assistance Force to build security and to ensure that a strengthened international military commitment is actively enabling the efforts of a robust and resilient civilian presence. In that regard, Canada is very pleased that the Secretary-General will join North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Heads of Government at the NATO/International Security Assistance Force summit to reinforce coordination at the very highest level.

UNAMA must continue to work closely with all levels of the Afghan Government to be certain that international engagement is facilitating the progressive assumption of responsibility by Afghans. Those relationships are central to the success of the Mission.

An enhanced role for the United Nations in Afghanistan will require strengthened UNAMA offices across the country. It will also require the establishment of a permanent United Nations presence in areas where its leadership and coordination are needed. The heavy demands on the provincial and regional offices of the United Nations will only intensify as the reach of the Afghan Government spreads further into the provinces and the international civilian footprint continues to expand. In that context, UNAMA must reinforce its offices. Vacant positions must be staffed, while new ones continue to be created.

Setting priorities will be key. We call on UNAMA to focus its cooperation with the Afghan Government on several important issues in the coming months: elections, subnational governance and reconciliation. Progress on all those fronts is imperative. Indeed, the authority of the Mission rests with the ongoing legitimacy of the Afghan Government in the eyes of its citizens. This is why we must support institutions such as the Independent Directorate for Local Governance, and it is why we must all support Afghan efforts to seek reconciliation with those who are prepared to choose peace.

(*spoke in French*)

These overarching goals should steer the work of the United Nations. However, they must not distract us from the reality that the people of Afghanistan confront daily. Afghans must have access to jobs that will feed their families; they must feel safe on their streets; and they must be confident when seeking justice from their authorities.

That requires a stronger focus on economic development and more training to build a police force that offers freedom from harassment and theft. It also means renewed vigour in the fight against corruption so that authority can no longer be perceived as distinct from merit and integrity. Each of those issues requires the sustained and serious engagement of the Afghan Government.

Canada has a proud tradition of international engagement. We take seriously our responsibility to promote the values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We also believe that a multilateral approach is required to address global problems. The long road that Canada has travelled alongside its partners in Afghanistan over the past five years has only deepened its commitment to those principles. We have demonstrated our commitment through a contribution of development aid unparalleled in our history. We have done so through the deployment of our brave men and women, civilians and soldiers, to one of the most dangerous parts of Afghanistan. And we have done so through our unwavering support for the United Nations and its important mission. Canada is committed to helping Afghanistan build a stable and democratic future. It is that determination that motivates our call for a stronger and more prominent United Nations role in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, we recognize that our expectations are high and that ours are not small requests. We make them in the full knowledge of the difficult terrain on which the United Nations must respond. We make them as we stand ready to support all such endeavours and remain committed to the success of our collective mission.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. İlkin (Turkey): Turkey has already aligned itself with the European Union statement. Therefore, I will refer to a few issues that, in our opinion, deserve particular attention.

First and foremost, we all have to remind ourselves that we are not failing in Afghanistan. Yes, we are not yet where we would like to be, and it is obvious that fully achieving our objectives will take longer than we initially expected, but that does not mean that we are on the losing side. After all, we are talking about a country that has been devastated by violent wars for decades. No one should expect a fast and easy recovery. What is important is to be able to remain committed and to take up with full determination every challenge and opportunity as it presents itself. That is extremely important because those who want to take Afghanistan back to its dark days aspire to do so mainly by weakening our resolve. They are hoping that the international community will tire itself out and eventually abandon Afghanistan to its fate.

Allowing that to happen would be a disaster, especially when one considers that Afghanistan is one of the top priorities for the entire international community. Indeed, a failure there would be seen as the failure of everything we stand for everywhere. In that regard, we should not allow ourselves to be carried away by events and incidents of the day, but should be able to see the general trends because, although they may be modest, it is those positive trends in many areas, ranging from education to healthcare, that contain elements enabling us to look forward to a bright future for Afghanistan.

Having said all that, can we then just be content with the way we are proceeding? Of course we cannot. There is certainly no room for complacency. On the contrary, because of the very reasons I just mentioned, we must be ever more determined, active and vigilant. The challenges facing us are tremendous and a setback in any one of them could deal a serious blow to our collective efforts to bring about stability and prosperity in Afghanistan.

To understand those challenges, one need look nowhere else than the Secretary-General's recent report. We fully agree not only with the observations set out in the report, but also with its recommendations, in particular as to the need for a common approach that integrates security, governance, the rule of law, human rights and social and economic development. For that, there needs to be a strong partnership between the Afghan Government, the United Nations, NATO and the rest of the international community under strict Afghan ownership and

leadership. Also, the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and the Afghanistan Compact should continue to be the foundations of our efforts. We should now be able to carry on with a robust and effective implementation phase.

At this critical stage, there is no doubt that the United Nations has a key role to play in leading the efforts of the international community. Here again, we are in full agreement with the priority areas identified in the Secretary-General's report. In particular, the need for enhanced coordination and political outreach remains essential to the success of that approach. We hope that the Security Council resolution to be adopted next week to extend the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) will reflect those very pertinent points.

I take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kai Eide. We are confident that, under his able leadership, UNAMA will effectively deliver what is expected of it. In that challenging endeavour, Turkey will lend it every support.

In fact, Turkey has already made extensive contributions to security and development in Afghanistan, as evidenced by, among other things, our significant support for the International Security Assistance Force and sizeable reconstruction assistance, rendered mainly through our Provincial Reconstruction Team in Vardak, and we will continue our efforts unrelentingly by exploring every opportunity.

To that end, and to give just one example, we are now providing emergency humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people hard hit by severe winter conditions. Moreover, we are also determined to take forward the trilateral cooperation process that we spearheaded between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey.

Before concluding, I should like to reiterate Turkey's strong commitment to Afghanistan's stability, security and prosperity. As one Afghan diplomat once told me, Turkey is the closest neighbour of Afghanistan without common borders. Therefore, we are resolved to act in keeping with the responsibilities of that privileged status.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Sen (India): Let me begin by placing on record India's commitment to working closely with Ambassador Kai Eide and his colleagues in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) as he takes on his new responsibilities as Special Representative of the Secretary-General. I wish him every success in his new responsibilities.

Today's debate is opportune, as it is set in the context of the Secretary-General's report on Afghanistan and the Council's consideration of the renewal of the mandate of UNAMA. Since this debate is to contribute to the latter while drawing upon the former, it is worthwhile to restate our goals in Afghanistan and to rededicate ourselves to achieving them in the most appropriate manner.

The central objective of the international community is to assist Afghanistan to complete its re-emergence from decades of war, civil strife and privation. We have set ourselves the goal of assisting Afghanistan to emerge as a modern democratic country rooted in its unique culture, at peace with itself, secure in its neighbourhood and on the path to sustainable economic development.

Each of those processes needs to be "Afghanized" at a pace and in a manner that is acceptable to the Afghan people and their Government. The prioritization of tasks in an environment as challenging as it is in Afghanistan is a difficult task, but we must let this be an Afghan-led process. As the Secretary-General's report notes, efforts are needed to ensure that "international assistance is driven by demand rather than by supply" (*S/2008/159, para. 4*). That is not to say that international partners should not have input in drawing up a list of priorities; but, at the end of the day, Afghan interlocutors should have the final say on where scarce resources — manpower and money — are allocated.

From that standpoint, our collective energies must be directed towards what is very clearly the first priority for the Afghan people, namely, security. As the report of the Secretary-General notes, "Provinces not affected by anti-Government violence have demonstrated an increasing capacity for delivering governance and economic development." (*ibid., para. 11*). India is convinced that effective, people-centric administration closely follows robust efforts to provide security. Development and security are closely intertwined and, on both, the international community

and the United Nations must be in closer coordination with each other and with relevant Afghan agencies.

To do so, on the one hand, while pressing forward forcefully in terms of security operations, we must also pay more attention to building capacity in the Afghan National Army and the National Police. I have been briefed by my colleague about what the Ambassador of Afghanistan has said about security, anti-terrorism and capacity-building. I share those views and would support them very strongly. Both those institutions require much more support in terms of training and the provision of equipment. There is also a need to devise new strategies to achieve optimum results in that regard. We must also bolster the security effort through stronger collective action, within Afghanistan and outside it, in ensuring that terrorist groups and their patrons are deprived of shelter, financing and ideological support. We should neither underestimate the Taliban and Al-Qaida nor fight terrorism with any less military and political determination than in the immediate post-2001 days.

The counter-narcotics effort is precisely at the intersection of the effort to assist the Government to establish its authority, the fight against terror and organized crime and the challenge of poverty alleviation and development.

The report of the Secretary-General exhorts the Government to muster the political will on the issue of eradication — sensitivities on this exist — and take measures against erring public officials and large landowners. That is part of the picture, but equally important are effective disincentives against poppy cultivation, in contrast to efforts to legitimize the practice via so-called legal opiates. However, international partners must also make corresponding efforts to upgrade Afghan capacity to take more effective action to prevent cross-border smuggling and movements, and work in a united way in support of actions by Afghan agencies, and internationally, to stem demand for narcotics products.

We must also simultaneously ramp up efforts to build local capacity across the board — from administration to security, from civil engineering to medical science. For India, capacity-building is a priority area, as we believe that that is one area of assistance that requires minimal investment but yields maximal long-term benefits. Additionally, a core capacity-building component can be added easily to all our aid projects in Afghanistan. India is already including a strong capacity-development component in all infrastructure projects it is executing in Afghanistan.

We must also reflect about the methods we employ to achieve those goals. Any objective analysis will tell us that despite the large investment in human capital and treasury resources, the international community is still faced with a significant challenge in ensuring that our objectives are met in Afghanistan. Quite clearly, apart from underlining our unshakeable determination to stay the course in Afghanistan, we need to improve the cohesion of our efforts.

To put it another way, to strengthen the connection between the Afghan people and their Government requires far more coordination among international partners, and between us and the Afghan Government. The United Nations is not only the best qualified, but also the most appropriate body to do so. However, we cannot achieve better coordination unless we give UNAMA the tools to bring about greater cohesion; and better cohesion is predicated upon more comprehensive access to information. Therefore, in providing a mandate for UNAMA to play a coordinating role, it is important to clearly outline an operational relationship between those two bodies, so that information on aid flows and on projects under implementation can be comprehensively mapped.

At the same time, UNAMA must also be mandated to increasingly streamline international assistance in support of a prioritized Afghan National Development Strategy, once it is adopted, and the core budget. That will have the effect of bringing credibility to the Strategy while bolstering the budget, and at the same time it will underscore that our assistance is in line with priorities set by Afghanistan.

India is fully committed to implementing the inter-related security, political and developmental challenges facing Afghanistan. Our commitment to reconstruction, development and capacity-building in Afghanistan is unflinching. India's assistance programme has now exceeded $750 million, and it spans the gamut of requirements — ranging from developing capacity to infrastructure and reconstruction. As a committed development partner of Afghanistan, India is willing to actively participate in any United Nations-led effort to improve donor cohesion, in support of Afghan-defined priorities.

In conclusion, let me also reiterate our abiding belief in the determination of the Afghan people to look beyond the tragedies of the past and to seize the opportunities that the future holds, on which my colleague the Afghan Ambassador spoke so eloquently. The international community must not fail them by displaying weakness of resolve, or by setting unrealistic benchmarks of progress. Our approach needs to be guided by the recognition of the distance Afghanistan has traversed in the past six years, rather than being derailed by the image of an idealized version of what we would like Afghanistan to be. We hope that the recognition of those realities will increasingly inform discussions on the subject of assistance to Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. De Klerk (Netherlands): Thank you, Mr. President, for providing my delegation the opportunity to participate in this open debate.

The Netherlands fully supports the statement made this morning by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union (EU), including his appreciation for the introduction provided by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and his warm words of welcome for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Eide. In the light of our substantial contribution, both militarily and in the field of development, we would like to make a few additional remarks on Afghan leadership and the role of the international community.

Almost every week, think tanks and non-governmental organizations produce reports about Afghanistan and the recommended course of action for the international community. Those reports sometimes overlook the fact that the primary responsibility for improving the destiny of the Afghan people indeed lies with the Government of President Karzai.

We praise the great efforts the Government of Afghanistan has made to bring stability and development to its people. For instance, this month the Afghan Government will be putting the finishing touches to the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. In our view, all international actors should, to the greatest extent possible, bring their aid efforts into line with the framework of that Afghan-led Strategy. Increasingly, Afghans will need to supply the sheet music for the many voices of the international choir.

Afghan ownership also means Afghan leadership. Afghan authorities will increasingly have to provide public services themselves. The Afghan Army will have to provide security on its own, while the police maintain public order. Afghans will also have to seriously fight corruption and the drug trade, both of which are undermining the State. We also look forward to progress in the area of transitional justice. None of those changes will happen overnight. For our part, we will support them wherever we can.

As far as the difficult situation in southern Afghanistan is concerned, we believe that the Government of Afghanistan needs to secure an enduring political settlement. That will require an effective stabilization programme that supports outreach efforts to reconcile Afghan communities and disenfranchised groups and bring them into the political process. Ordinary Afghans have to be shown that progress is being made on the issues that affect their daily lives. To support that process, the Afghan Army and the International Security Assistance Force will need to maintain sufficient military pressure on the insurgency.

Let me also say a few words about the international community. The comprehensive report (S/2008/159) of the Secretary-General issued on 6 March rightly underscores the synergy in objectives between the United Nations, NATO, the EU and bilateral donors. We hope that the new resolution on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) will build on that by further strengthening the centrality of the United Nations. To be more precise, as long as Afghan institutions need international support to deal with development and governance, the United Nations needs to take a lead role in coordinating international efforts.

We welcome the high priority that Mr. Guéhenno has attached to cooperation between the United Nations and NATO in Afghanistan, symbolized by the presence of the Secretary-General at the upcoming meeting to be held in Bucharest. We also welcome the consideration of expanding UNAMA's presence in the country. Asking the United Nations to take the lead means that we, the international community, must be prepared to give the United Nations the authority to direct international efforts and that all other actors need to be willing to be coordinated. We are very much looking forward to Ambassador Eide taking up his functions as the new Special Representative for

Afghanistan. We trust he will play a pivotal role in better coordinating reconstruction and development programmes on the ground.

Our goal should be to put our national hobbyhorses out to pasture and replace them with a strong multilateral engagement led by the United Nations. The provincial reconstruction team — a provincial military base used as a platform for aid efforts for lack of an alternative — was, for instance, always intended to be a temporary solution. The Taliban and the drug traffickers are, however, not confined by provincial borders. Nor indeed are poverty and illiteracy. Thus, one of the provincial reconstruction teams' main duties should be to make themselves redundant as quickly as possible, so that UNAMA, the United Nations funds and programmes and, last but not least, the Afghan local governments can take on their role. Against this background, we would like to encourage the Security Council and the Secretary-General to pursue as a matter of urgency a strengthened role for the United Nations in all of the country, and especially in the troubled south.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Al-Jarman (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month and to wish you every success. I would also like to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Panama, for his successful leadership of the work of the Council last month. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations for his comprehensive evaluation of the present situation in Afghanistan. I welcome the Secretary-General's recent decision to appoint Mr. Kai Eide as his Special Representative for Afghanistan and as Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

In spite of some progress made by the international community in Afghanistan over the past six years since the conclusion of the Bonn Agreement — particularly in the areas of advancing economic recovery, building infrastructure, reforming the judiciary system and improving a number of educational, health and local governance services — the political transition process in Afghanistan continues to face serious challenges due to the unsafe and volatile environment, the slow implementation of national reform programmes and initiatives, a notorious lack of resources and the country's poor infrastructure.

The United Arab Emirates, which has stood by the Afghan people since the beginning of their plight and which has made generous contributions to emergency humanitarian relief and economic recovery and rehabilitation programmes, is deeply concerned at the increasing threat of violence, which continues to impede the country's political and development efforts and which prevents the affected population in 36 districts from having access to humanitarian supplies. Indeed, the threat of violence has also had a direct impact on the lives of innocent civilians, United Nations personnel, humanitarian workers, the personnel of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and members of diplomatic missions. A member of the United Arab Emirates diplomatic mission in Kabul was critically injured last January in an armed attack. Therefore, while we welcome the appointment of the former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, as Chairman of the Independent Panel on Safety and Security of United Nations Personnel and Premises, we affirm the importance of all parties honouring their obligations to maintain the safety and security of international workers and members of diplomatic missions in accordance with the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and the 1973 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents.

In this context, we reiterate the importance of the following subjects. First, it is important to re-evaluate Afghanistan's national security structures and judicial system and to implement a comprehensive strategy aimed at reforming, training and building the capacities of security personnel and the Afghan National Army, especially as regards meeting the requirements of security, fulfilling the country's law enforcement needs and combating armed groups.

Secondly, it is important to mobilize and increase various forms of assistance to the Government of Afghanistan in order to enable it to build its capacities and improve its performance, particularly in achieving national reconciliation, extending central authority to the entire territory of Afghanistan, providing development support to local councils, establishing

alternative development with the support of international partners, implementing the national poverty-reduction strategy, providing essential health, social and educational services and alleviating the suffering of the Afghan people, many of whom remain without electricity and energy to this day.

Thirdly, it is important to strengthen the central and neutral role of the United Nations in leading the international community's efforts in Afghanistan; in coordinating the humanitarian assistance and donor activities in Afghanistan in accordance with the needs of the Afghan people, especially vulnerable sectors; in ensuring provincial reconstruction; in providing technical and financial support for the elections scheduled to be held next year; and in addressing the problem of landmines, a problem which continues to pose a great danger to the Afghan people and which impedes economic recovery. There is also a need to deal with the problem of refugees. In this regard, we reaffirm our support for Afghanistan's proposal to convene an international conference on the return and reintegration of Afghan refugees later this year.

In conclusion, we highly appreciate the substantial efforts made by the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan under the leadership of NATO, by UNAMA and by other international partners with a view to bringing security and stability to Afghanistan and achieving the goals set out within the framework of the Afghanistan Compact of 2006 to improve the lives of the Afghan people. At the same time, we emphasize the importance of focusing on the priorities of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and its implementation mechanisms, so that the Strategy's goals can be achieved, especially those relating to the advancement of peace, development, reconstruction and stability in this friendly country.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his briefing to the Council today. I also would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Tom Koenigs, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, and his colleagues in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for their hard work and dedication to the cause of the Afghan people.

We congratulate Mr. Kai Eide on his new assignment and wish him every success in that important position. We hope that he will be able to perform his immense duty to improve the situation in Afghanistan in line with the policies of the Afghan Government.

Two years after the adoption of the Afghanistan Compact, the country is witnessing major accomplishments and continuing to face daunting challenges. Undoubtedly, there have been remarkable achievements in certain areas in Afghanistan in recent years.

The Afghan Government is finalizing the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, which will serve as the country's main national planning and budgeting exercise and principal poverty-eradication strategy. Also, as indicated in the report at hand, progress continues in several sectors, including inter alia health services, enrolment in schools, gross domestic product and investment in the natural resources of the country.

At the same time and despite these remarkable accomplishments, threats, such as terrorism and insecurity caused by Al-Qaida, the Taliban and other criminal and terrorist groups, as well as the menace of opium production and drug trafficking, have intensified and continue to be of grave concern.

As mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report, in 2007, the level of terrorist activities increased sharply from that of the previous year, as has the number of attacks against local and international humanitarian workers. Many humanitarian workers have, unfortunately, been either killed or abducted. We are concerned about the increase in insecurity and terrorism in Afghanistan and unequivocally condemn all acts of terrorism perpetrated in that country.

In our view, to address insecurity in Afghanistan more serious consideration should be given to the necessity of full national ownership by Afghans over the security of their country. Certainly, strengthening the independence and integrity of the Afghan National Security Forces and increasing home-grown security in the country are key to realizing the long-awaited national ownership by Afghans of their own security issues. Additionally, capacity-building and reconstruction of infrastructure, including through utilizing regional potentials, can also contribute to the improvement of the overall situation in Afghanistan.

One of the most daunting challenges facing Afghanistan, with serious consequences for the country, the region and beyond, is the vicious threat posed by the cultivation, production and trafficking of narcotic drugs. This threat has thus far had serious negative impact on the economic development of Afghanistan and has contributed to insecurity in the country.

It has also caused serious problems for the wider region, especially neighbouring countries, including Iran. As pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General, Afghanistan is emerging as one of the largest suppliers of cannabis in the world and, despite certain efforts made by the Afghan Government to combat this challenge, tangible results in this regard still remain elusive and very limited.

Therefore, more vigorous, decisive and concerted actions, both on the part of Afghanistan and the international community, are needed if this vicious menace is to be tackled in a meaningful and effective way.

It is an unfortunate reality that the progress made in this regard, including through implementation of Afghanistan's national drug control strategy, have been limited and unsatisfactory so far. We concur with the Secretary-General that there is an urgent need to strengthen enforcement activities on eradication and interdiction of trafficking in illicit drugs, including chemical precursors, and dismantling of production facilities.

As a country that has resolutely fought the menace of drug trafficking originating from Afghanistan and as a nation that has endured heavy losses of lives and material in this costly and deadly war over the past three decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to be resolute and at the forefront of the world-wide war against drug traffickers and insists on the necessity of more tangible actions on the part of Afghanistan and the international community in this important fight.

As a neighbouring country with deep historical and cultural relations with Afghanistan and as a country that has hosted and continues to host millions of Afghans, Iran has a high stake and a vital interest in the development, stability, security and prosperity of Afghanistan. We have therefore spared no effort to support the Afghan Government in its endeavours to improve the security and economic situation of the country.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has made sincere and concrete contributions to the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and, despite the illegitimate sanctions imposed on our nation, we will continue our development assistance to Afghanistan to the extent possible. The economic development of Afghanistan and that of the region are mutually reinforcing and can not be seen in isolation from one another.

Iran has been actively engaged in various infrastructural projects in Afghanistan, including electricity projects, road and railroad construction, manpower training, health-care services and many other projects.

Moreover, the second phase of our development assistance to Afghanistan is underway and will continue with building railroads to the western part of Afghanistan and completing previous infrastructure projects. The results of Iran's contribution to the reconstruction and economic development of Afghanistan are tangible and can be seen in the daily lives of the Afghan people.

Furthermore, our nation has generously hosted millions of Afghan refugees and illegal migrants in the past several decades. We have tried our best to make them feel at home at a time when they were in need and going through hardship.

Now that the situation in Afghanistan is different, we earnestly hope that conditions in that country will pave the way for the repatriation of Afghan refugees to their home country in a timely and promising manner. As indicated in the report at hand, the efforts of both Afghanistan and Iran have continued in order to find mutually acceptable solutions to this problem.

Before concluding, I wish to stress that we attach high importance to the continued impartial and central role of the United Nations in Afghanistan. We believe that the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan should be aimed at reinforcing the leadership and ownership on the part of Afghanistan over the country's affairs, and should be in line with the efforts made by Afghan Government to improve the overall situation in that country. The Government of Afghanistan needs the support of its neighbouring countries but, even more, that of the entire international community.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, for its part, has done and continues to do its utmost to help and strengthen the Government of Afghanistan, under the leadership of President Karzai, so it can assume full ownership and authority over the affairs of the country.

The President: I now give the floor to the permanent representative of Kyrgyzstan.

Mr. Jeenbaev (Kyrgyzstan) *(spoke in Russian)*: It is my honour to speak on behalf of the member countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The situation recently emerging in Afghanistan is of serious concern owing to the stepping up of terrorist activities of the Taliban and Al-Qaida. Extremists continue to impede the assurance of full security in a number of areas. As you know, the level of violence and the number of criminal groups and drug bands continue to grow. This situation undermines confidence in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

There is a need for effective measures to prevent further deterioration of the security situation in this country. Given this, we must continue to seek to isolate extremist leaders, above all, those who are on the sanctions list of the United Nations Security Council 1267 (1999) Committee, while we allow for rank and file Taliban members, not tainted by war crimes, the possibility of full-fledged participation in a peaceful life.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) needs to seek to achieve just those aims within its mandate. At the same time, we believe it would be erroneous to take the view that, by coming to terms with allegedly repentant Taliban, one could achieve stabilization in the situation in this country. Experience has shown us that such an approach only helps to strengthen the positions of extremists and enables them to increase their subversive activities.

The problem of illegal drug trafficking is another complex obstacle preventing the achievement of security and stability for the Afghan people. The subversive activities of extremists and terrorists are funded by significant financial sources, the narcotics trade chief among them. We are greatly concerned at the continuing poppy cultivation and opium trafficking, which are major sources of financing for the terrorist activities of the Taliban and Al-Qaida. According to a study conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, that illegal trade poses an immense threat not only to Afghans themselves, but to the international community as a whole.

The fight against the growing production and dissemination of drugs must waged by, inter alia, cutting off the channels for the marketing of narcotics in other regions of the world, particularly Europe. Counter-narcotics efforts must be increased considerably not only in Afghanistan, but also in the surrounding region, through the establishment of a comprehensive system of counter-narcotics and financial security belts, with a coordinating role to be played by the United Nations and with the participation of neighbouring countries. In that regard, we should further utilize the capacities of regional organizations that have demonstrated their effectiveness in this area, particularly the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

We believe that practical cooperation must be developed between the CSTO and NATO with respect to counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics efforts. Afghan and Pakistani security forces should be involved, in particular by allowing them to participate in Operation Channel, regularly carried out by the CSTO, aimed at establishing a counter-narcotics belt along the borders of Afghanistan. The Operation has developed effective mechanisms for combating drug trafficking that have been in operation for a number of years along the northern route — that is, the route from Afghanistan to Europe.

As a result of those operations, the competent authorities of the States members and Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan, China and Ukraine, as observer States of the CSTO, have removed dozens of tons of drugs from the illegal trade. We are pleased to note that, in September 2007, Afghanistan participated for the first time in Operation Channel. We also note that it is important that the CSTO and NATO have concluded an agreement on all aspects of Afghanistan-related issues.

We are convinced that additional measures must be taken to build the combat capacities of the Afghan armed forces, so that they can eventually ensure the country's security independently. We must re-evaluate

the way in which we equip the Afghan National Army. We must ensure that it has modern weaponry, including air assets and armoured vehicles, and that we improve the professional training of its personnel. CSTO member States are developing cooperation with Afghanistan, including bilateral cooperation, to that end.

But military measures alone are not sufficient to overcome the problems in Afghanistan; it is imperative to fully carry out the tasks set out in the London Afghanistan Compact. The fact that that document was adopted by consensus attests to the international community's firm resolve to continue to provide broad support for post-conflict reconstruction in Afghanistan. To that end, deadlines have been established for addressing key problems in the areas of security, counter-narcotics, governance and human rights. It is essential that, in international efforts on the Afghan front, the central coordinating role continue to be played by the United Nations, under whose leadership the comprehensive monitoring and coordination of the Compact's implementation must continue.

A crucial factor in ensuring long-term stabilization in Afghanistan is the participation of all components of society, including various political, ethnic and religious groups, in the building of an effective and sovereign Afghan State. CSTO member States are committed to the long-term reconstruction of Afghanistan. We are prepared to continue to assist the regional cooperation process by participating in the international efforts in the country in key areas, including security, economic rehabilitation and counter-narcotics efforts.

We believe that an important factor in promoting a comprehensive settlement is the development of multifaceted cooperation between Afghanistan and other States in the region. To that end, Afghanistan assistance programmes should involve regional partners, including through their implementation of contracts with donor countries and international organizations and their participation in the implementation of a number of projects to rebuild energy facilities and the transportation infrastructure in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I should like to wish Mr. Kai Eide every success in fulfilling his mandate.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now call on the representative of Kazakhstan.

Ms. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): Permit me to begin by expressing our gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate on the situation in Afghanistan. I would also like to commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his report (S/2008/159).

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Kyrgyzstan on behalf of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The reason that I have taken the floor is that Afghanistan is located in the Central Asian region, and the security situation and the development of that country are of great importance for Kazakhstan.

As was duly pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security", despite some progress in the peace process and in the reconstruction in Afghanistan, the resolution of problems in the country continues to face serious difficulties. The overall situation in Afghanistan continues to be characterized by persistent problems in the area of security, while the Taliban and other extremist elements continue to pose challenges to stability in Afghanistan.

The international community and Afghanistan still face enormous tasks if they are to strengthen the new executive authority, build the country's statehood and rehabilitate its social and economic situation. Thus, in order to meet the security challenge and to stabilize Afghanistan, a complex approach is needed — an approach that encompasses the areas of security, governance, the rule of law, human rights and social and economic development.

(*spoke in Russian*)

Another reason for the international community to be concerned is the growing production and smuggling of drugs. In 2007, raw-opium production in Afghanistan increased by more than 35 percent over that in 2006, and the size of the opium-poppy harvest has reached dangerous levels. Here, we should note that the primary flow of heroin passes through the States of Central Asia and the Russian Federation. A considerable portion of it ends up in transit countries, unfortunately, while the rest of it is shipped to Europe.

The constant increase in opium production in Afghanistan and the instability along its borders are

compelling the neighbouring countries to pool their efforts to counter the drug threat. As a result, in November 2007, the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre was established in Almaty, Kazakhstan, as part of a pilot project. The Centre will become fully operational once it has established ties with Interpol, with the law enforcement agencies of the countries in Central Asia and the Russian Federation and with other regional structures.

Kazakhstan welcomes the assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in establishing the Centre. It is our hope that the UNODC will continue to make efforts in that regard and that it will increase its technical assistance to the Central Asian region in general. We also reaffirm our readiness to support efforts to establish a counter-narcotics belt along Afghanistan's borders, within the framework of the CSTO. We hope that these counter-narcotics and counter-terrorist efforts will be accompanied by genuine social and economic programmes, in particular for average citizens.

At the same time, however, the development process cannot place in the absence of security. In that connection, the primary aim of the international community should be to strengthen the institutions and security forces of the Afghan State to fight the growing production of opium and the activities of extremists. We express our deep gratitude to those United Nations Member States that are making genuine contributions to the reform of the security sector in Afghanistan, including reform in the military, political and judicial areas, in the area of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and in the fight against illegal drugs.

Furthermore, we believe that international assistance should be provided directly to recipients through the establishment of effective and transparent allocation and monitoring mechanisms under the auspices of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) or other intergovernmental and regional organizations.

For its part, Kazakhstan has continued to provide bilateral assistance to Afghanistan in rebuilding the economy and stabilizing the situation in the country. In late 2007, the Government of Kazakhstan adopted a programme of assistance to Afghanistan, with a budget of $3 million thus far. Under that programme, Afghanistan has been provided with wheat, and resources have been allocated to build roads, hospitals and schools in a number of provinces. In addition, we are considering the possibility of providing assistance in retraining officers of the Afghan police and border service in Kazakh training institutions.

As a partner country located in the region, the Government of Kazakhstan expresses its readiness to provide a venue, if necessary, for the international forum to discuss the actions to be taken by the international community to further improve the situation in Afghanistan. Kazakhstan remains committed to efforts by international partners for the Afghan people in establishing a better future for that country.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our hope that the work of the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Kai Eide, be productive and successful.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.20 p.m.